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Disjointed Chiefs . . . By Roscoe Drummond

Pentagon Strife Can't Be Tolerated

IT IS well that the public should understand what lies behind the inter-service strife which is today plaguing the Pentagon more fiercely than ever.

This strife is reflected in the struggle of the Army, Navy, and Air Force to get its hands first on new weapons and to pre-empt them as a means of enlarging its role and expanding its budget.

It is reflected in the failure of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to reach firm joint decisions on the size of the services—so that we may know if we have a proper balance between general war and limited war capabilities—and the role each shall play.

The reason it is urgent that the public understand the nature of this struggle is that there is no solution to it short of a much greater unification at the top of the services and there will be no such integration unless public opinion supports it. There are just too many vested pressures against it.

IS THIS just a bothersome

problem or is it so serious where we do not consider that something adequate, together with time, changing ought to be done soon?

ALL THE evidence anyone there should be another needs on this subject is superfluous. What we seem to me, is contained in what should go forward more the able, calmly worded, candid report which came from the chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, Rep. George H. Mahon (D-Tex.) who knows as much about the Pentagon as any two Secretaries of Defense combined.

Mr. Mahon offers this restrained but somber conclusion:

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff, a corporate body, is not providing the kind of advice and leadership which the country requires."

He then quotes the testimony of Gen. Maxwell Taylor, Army Chief of Staff, as follows:

"I think that our weakness is in not determining standards of sufficiency—how much is enough for the atomic retaliatory force, for air defense, for limited war, for strategic air lift and sealift, for reserve-type forces. We never look at the problem (as a whole) and determine whether each function is properly supported..."

If the Joint Chiefs do not collectively consider and decide such matters as these, what do they decide? Here the Mahon report states:

That the Joint Chiefs consider whether there should be one or two war colleges at Norfolk, but do not consider whether we should have an Army of 800,000—or more or less.

That the Joint Chiefs consider whether there should be a new building some

WHY WHY Why are the Joint Chiefs in such opposition concerned with the lesser problem and fail to come to grips with the larger problems? Rep. Mahon's answer

These are good able men, but they have a great deal of vested interest. Each member of the Joint Chiefs is so busy looking after his own service, he doesn't have much time to do the work of the Joint Chiefs.

This is part of the answer, but not all of it.

The blunt truth is that the Joint Chiefs are not really a corporate body at all. Each is the spokesman of his nearly sovereign service and each does not seem to exert much of a voice, if any at all, in each other's decisions.

With the changing shape of warfare, the very survival of each service is at stake when it doesn't get control of a major new weapon and a major role in using it. If the Army doesn't get control of antimissile missiles, it runs the risk of shrinking to the size of the Coast Guard. If the Navy loses Polaris, its mission shrinks. If the Air Force doesn't dominate IRBMs and the like, what's it for?

It is interesting to consider of the Joint Chiefs has such a massive vested interest in his own service, the Joint Chiefs as a body is not able, Mr. Mahon soberly reports, "providing the kind of advice and leadership the country requires."

This disjointedness cannot safely be tolerated.

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